



## **News Release #18 – Friday Update**

For release at 10:00 a.m.

December 6, 2019

**Beaumont, Texas** – Unified Command reports ongoing response efforts at TPC Group Port Neches Operations remain focused on safely bringing the event to an end.

**Situational update:** Response efforts continue to focus on activities to secure site equipment and minimize impact to the environment, while preserving the safety of emergency responders. This morning, we have identified small fires in the impacted area on site. These small residual fires were anticipated and are being contained. Response teams continue to monitor and assess. Smoke may be visible.

As reported yesterday (Thursday), the fire impacted 12 tanks on site. Plans are underway to safely transport remaining materials from the site. All tanks containing materials are being evaluated and prioritized for action. To further protect remaining materials, technical experts with TPC Group will introduce inhibitors to stabilize materials in impacted tanks. Equipment used to safely transport material from the site is being assessed. If this equipment cannot be used safely, an alternate plan will be executed, up to and including safe destruction of the material on site.

**Air Monitoring update:** On Thursday, responders on site repaired a leaking pressure relief valve on an impacted tank, the source of elevated butadiene readings. Air monitoring immediately showed significant reduction of butadiene levels following the closure. Unified Command remains diligent in efforts to monitor air quality around the site and in the community. Federal, state, and local agencies have been conducting stationary and roaming air monitoring since the event occurred, and will continue to do so through the course of the event. Nearly 100 environmental specialists from multiple agencies and groups are on the ground performing air assessments at numerous locations and 40+ stationary air monitors are active. Monitoring coverage extends throughout the county and is providing real-time air quality data.

Occasional elevated air readings may continue to register as response teams manage the event and repair tanks containing butadiene. Since 5:30 p.m. yesterday (Thursday), experts with the Center for Environment and Environmental Health (CTEH) have collected more than 3,000 air samples. Only two of those samples contained elevated levels (.5 and .7 ppm) of butadiene, which quickly dissipated. These levels are well below those that may contribute to health risks.

As a reminder, breathing or inhaling airborne butadiene can cause sensory irritation or temporary discomfort and nuisance-type health impacts. Butadiene levels detected near the facility and in the community throughout the course of this event have remained far below levels that could contribute to long-term health risk.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is partnering with the EPA as a third party resource dedicated to reviewing the response plan established by Unified Command and TPC Group. ATSDR has initiated a review of the data available collected by EPA, TCEQ and CTEH and will provide a full third party report of its assessment of the collected data.

**Claims activities update:** Approximately 200 claims representatives, including call center operators, field claim adjusters and claims processors, remain in the area. Field claim adjusters are in the field from 8:00 a.m. to one hour before sundown daily in the areas of highest impact. Claims are divided into two general categories: (1) evacuation-related claims cover lodging and meals/incidental expenses and (2) property/personal property damage claims cover damages to homes and other personal property.

Claims Processing Centers at **511 Grigsby Ave. in Port Neches** and **250 Dowlen Rd. in Beaumont** are completing claims by appointment from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily. Residents can submit claims and schedule appointments to meet with claims representatives by calling the **Community Assistance Helpline at (866) 601-5880**.

**Evacuation claims information:** To get a head start on the **Evacuation Claim Form**, residents may click on [ [HYPERLINK "https://tinyurl.com/rsno5ay"](https://tinyurl.com/rsno5ay) ] and complete the form online and submit supporting documentation. This [ [HYPERLINK "https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156"](https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156) ] is for residents who were in designated evacuation areas and have not already completed an Evacuation Claim form with a claims representative. Completing the [ [HYPERLINK "https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156"](https://form.jotform.com/93328046922156) ] in advance can help expedite the claims process.

**Property claims information:** Claims adjusters are conducting damage inspections in the high impact areas. Claims processing center personnel are making calls and scheduling appointments for the medium and low impact areas. Residents are requested to have the following information with them when submitting property-related claims (by phone or in-person):

- A Photo ID (driver's license, utility bill, U.S. Military ID) and one of the following address verification documents for adults listed in the household is required:
  - Mail, lease/mortgage payment, passport, voter registration card, property tax records

The helpline continues to experience a high volume of calls. We sincerely appreciate callers' patience and understanding. A claims process handout is available for download on [ HYPERLINK "http://www.portnechesreponse.com/" ].

Updates and information continue to be posted on the web at [ HYPERLINK "http://www.portnechesresponse.com/" ], on Facebook at [ HYPERLINK "https://www.facebook.com/portneches.response.1" ] and on Twitter at PortNechesUC.

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